

STATE OF WASHINGTON

Annual Progress and Services Report

Submitted June 2003

Section XIII ACF Initiatives

Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services

ACF Initiatives

Many Children's Administration (CA) efforts detailed in Section III: Strategic Plan of this Annual Progress and Services Report relate to the various ACF initiatives. While selected specific efforts are noted below, it is important to note that CA's Academy, required training for new social work staff, incorporates strengthening families philosophies and youth development issues throughout its 6 weeks curriculum. It emphasizes that legal, ethical and basic "best practice" requires an active search for fathers and that services to both maternal and paternal relatives are to be part of the child's plan. It informs staff that religious organizations frequently serve as supports to children and families.

Healthy Marriage

Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN)

Organized in the early 1980s to lead Washington State's efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect and to encourage and support effective community prevention efforts, WCPCAN is funded under the Community-based Family Resource and Support Program as an office of the Governor and a freestanding public agency. CA has a representative on the council.

The funding focus in the WCPCAN Requests for Proposals for community based child abuse prevention programs encourages applications for "services to strengthen healthy parenting partnerships (e.g. services that foster and promote the well-being of marital relationships)."

Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)

A Children's Administration representative serves on the Family Violence Option Advisory Committee, which reviews issues related to Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) in its current configuration, as well as future TANF re-authorization and implementation issues, and how these issues may affect family violence victims. This representative also participated on the committee's sub-committee on Responsible Fatherhood and Marriage Promotion. This subcommittee:

- researched, reviewed, and discussed issues related to marriage promotion;
- reviewed marriage promotion initiatives and sample programs across the country;
- reviewed research papers regarding the Responsible Fatherhood issue;
- reviewed pilot projects across the country; and

- compiled information regarding active Responsible Fatherhood programs within Washington State.

The committee is developing interview questions for future face-to-face meetings with Responsible Fatherhood program staff, as well as sample criteria for programs that wish to receive government funding. The committee also identified the need to address TANF-related needs of perpetrators of family violence as a separate issue, and created a new subcommittee for this purpose. Plans are being made to involve domestic violence treatment providers to address training needs of TANF workers.

Responsible Fatherhood

Both Children's Administration's permanency planning policy and staff training emphasizes searches for maternal **and** paternal relatives.

Fatherhood in the Child Welfare System Project

CA's Region 6 is one of two project sites for the Fatherhood in the Child Welfare System Project, a three year Stuart Foundation grant that seeks to develop a model plan for implementing father-friendly policies and practices in the child welfare system. The grant's second site is San Mateo County Human Services Agency, California.

The development of this model includes the assessment of barriers to the inclusion of fathers, training of child welfare staff in father friendly practices, and evaluation of the success of implementation of father friendly practices at a policy and practice level.

The study began June 2002. The first year primarily involves a process evaluation to provide both baseline information about pre-pilot status of policies and practices of interest and an evaluation of existing data available from management information systems at the agency level that can inform the development of the model. The process evaluation includes:

- an evaluation of father data already available from other research projects (but not yet analyzed from the fatherhood perspective),
- a review of all written policies to determine if there are discernable differences in policies/practice for cases that have fathers involved,
- an agency self assessment and
- a pre-test of the social workers who provide direct service and case management.

The agency self-assessment and social worker survey explore:

- organizational support of service delivery to fathers
- policies and procedures regarding inclusion of fathers
- services and resources available to fathers
- agency friendliness toward fathers
- staff attitudes and preparedness toward working with fathers
- staff perceptions of current practices and procedures regarding inclusion of fathers in case plans and service delivery for their children who are in dependency status

Once the model has been implemented and revised based on input and experience, a more formal summative evaluation will be conducted. A measurement of variables and outcomes of interest will be taken at successive time points and compared over time to assess change. The final report is expected June 2005. CA will use this study to impact systems change.

The Washington State Initiative for Fatherhood and Male Involvement

The Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse (WCPCAN) serves as the organizational lead for the Washington State Initiative for Fatherhood and Male Involvement and is supported through grant funds for this effort by the Governors Early Learning Head Start-State Collaboration Project (HSSCP). In less than one year the originating vision of the initiative has been transformed into a reality through the efforts of a 20 member Leadership Advisory Committee and collaborative partners. Achievements include:

- development of a mission statement, strategic plan, logo and tagline,
- establishment of a formalized structure for the initiative based upon a public-private coalition of concerned stakeholders,
- participation in statewide trainings on father involvement, fathers role in school readiness and shaken baby syndrome and at the 2003 International Fatherhood Conference in San Diego,
- co-sponsorship of the 2003 Seattle Mariners Father of the Year Essay Contest,
- distribution of more than 3000 Guides for Expectant Father brochures in both English and Spanish developed by Bernie Dorsey of Conscious Fathering, and
- development and coordination of the June 2003 statewide Fathering the Future Forum.

Efforts to promote and encourage awareness of the importance of fathers through dissemination of research, professional trainings, community events,

and consultation to assure the establishment of father-friendly environments in hospitals, childcare, early childhood education, schools, businesses, and social service agencies will continue. These efforts include the creation of a [website](http://www.fatheringthefuture.org) to serve as a clearinghouse at www.fatheringthefuture.org.

As the organizational lead for the initiative, WCPCAN identified fathers as a special population group to be considered for funding. As a result, \$210,000 will be invested towards the development of two statewide fathering programs during the next three years: Children Home Societies Fathering Project and the Kindering Center's Fathers Network.

Youth Development

Section VIII: Independent Living (IL) Skills Program specifically details CA strategies and goals in positive youth development. Among those strategies are the following:

- Chafee Independent Living providers include in their independent living (IL) curriculum pregnancy prevention, responsible parenting, and connection to community services.
- Mentoring is provided on several levels to youth in foster care and those leaving foster care, including through IL providers for youth 16 to 21 and transition programs for the 18 -21 year old age group.
- The Governor's Scholarship Program provides financial support for higher education.
- Youth Advisory Boards continue to be developed in each of the six Division of Children and Family Services Regions.
- Youth will play an active role as paid facilitators at the Positive Youth Development conference in July, 2003.

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Sally's House

"Sally's House" opened in May 2002 as a collaborative effort between CA and the Salvation Army, a faith based organization, in Spokane. This a no decline, immediate response, 24 hour per day, 7 day per week, receiving care service in a facility-based setting for up to 18 children, ages 2-12. Services include

- room, board, clothing, and personal incidentals;
- initial needs assessment for children specific to speech/language development, special diets, behavioral issues, immediate health concerns, dental/vision;

- collaboration with social work and Kidscreen staff to determine the need for a more comprehensive evaluation and/or services;
- transportation to each child's school of origin at time of placement via a coordinated agreement between Sally's House and the local school districts;
- a coordinated and well supervised series of activities for educational, social and recreational development including study sessions, library access, pool access and field trips; and
- discharge summary information used to determine the most appropriate foster care placement for a child.

Faith Based Child Placing Agencies

Many child placing agencies CA contracts with, such as Catholic Community Services and Lutheran Social Services, are faith based organizations.

Rural Initiative

As a statewide agency, CA is responsible for services to children and families in rural as well as urban areas. While geographic isolation in our rural areas do present barriers to service, CA staff serve all areas of the state and work with contracted providers to offer purchased services for all our children and families.